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Bideford Rural District Council

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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ANNUAL REPORT

For the year 1940 together with that for the year 1941

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF—

Medical Officer of Health :

DR. N. BOWRING BETTS, F.R.C.S.

Sanitary Inspector, Building and Sanitary Surveyor :

From 1/1/40 until 30/6/40.

F. M. W. KING, M.S.I.A., A.R.S.I.

(Now serving as a Hygiene Instructor, R.A.F.)

From 1/7/40 until 31/7/41.

E. W. SPIEGELHALTER. (Acting.)

From 11/8/41 and at present.

I. C. WILLIAMS, M.S.I.A., M.R.I.P.H. & H. (Hons.)

Clerk :

Miss J. E. SHARP.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the district are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. In peace-time, and in wartime to a lesser extent, a great deal of the work is brought about by the popularity of the district for visitors. Many hotels, boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

STATISTICS.

Area (Acres)	53,570
Population (Census 1931)	5,536
Number of Inhabited Houses ...	1,425
Rateable Value	£16,664
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	£73/6/2.449

1940 - 1941,

ANNUAL REPORTS

Of the Medical Officer of Health for the Bideford Rural District.

Cleverdon House,
Bradworthy.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the public health and general conditions of the district during the years 1940 and 1941.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,
N. BOWRING BETTS, F.R.C.S.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.	1940	1941
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.10	11.67
Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales ...	14.6	14.2
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) Births	55.55	12.34

Deaths.	1940	1941
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	13.31	8.07
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	14.42	7.93
Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	14.3	12.9

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

	Deaths		Rate per 1,000 (live and still) Births	
	1940	1941	1940	1941
Puerperal Sepsis ...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Other Puerperal Causes	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age.

	1940		1941	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Legitimate	4	4	5	Nil
Illegitimate	Nil	2	Nil	Nil

Death Rate.	1940	1941
All Infants per 1,000 live births	146	61.74
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	117	61.74
All Infants per 1,000 live births (England and Wales	55	59
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	9	6
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil	Nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	1	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years) ...	Nil	Nil

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Hospitals.

1. **Tuberculosis.**

There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this district. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple. Convalescent patients from this District are sometimes sent to the Devon County Council's large and well-equipped sanatorium at Hawkmoor, South Devon.

2. **Isolation of Infectious Diseases.**

Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated, or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots and 8 observation cubicles.

During 1940 and 1941, 27 cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District, 14 patients suffering from Scarlet Fever, 12 from Diphtheria and 1 from Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis.

3. **Smallpox.**
The Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council provides treatment for any case of smallpox that may arise in this District.

4. **General.**
The Bideford and District Hospital serves the District extremely well for general medical and surgical treatment. This hospital contains about 40 beds.

District Nursing.

There are six District Nurses, all qualified midwives, working in the district.

Laboratory Facilities.

This District is admirably served by the Devon County Council Medical Department's Bacteriological Laboratory, which is situated at Dix's Field, Exeter.

Disinfection of Infected Bedding and Clothing.

By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

Ambulance Facilities.

There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford, which serves the Rural District. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.
Notifications.

Diseases.	Total number of cases Notified.		Cases admitted to Hospital.		Total Deaths.	
	1940	1941	1940	1941	1940	1941
Scarlet Fever	19	3	14	Nil	Nil	Nil
Diphtheria	3	9	3	9	Nil	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pneumonia	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Dysentry	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Opthalmia Neonatorum	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Anterior Poliomyelitis...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Measles	2	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough	1	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil

Diphtheria Immunisation.

A high proportion of the children under 15 years of age have availed themselves of the above scheme. Eaeh school in the distriet has been visited and 1,137 ehildren have been immunised.

It is hoped that a better response is obtained from the ehildren under sehool age during the eoming year.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Tuberculosis.

The number of eases of Tubereulosis remaining on the register was as follows :—

		31st Dee., 1940	31st Dee., 1941
(a) Pulmonary.	Males ...	3	2
	Females	6	7
(b) Non-Pulmonary.	Males ...	5	3
	Females	5	5

Total eases on the register, December 31st, 1941	17
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 1940	19
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 1939	17
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 1938	18

1. New Cases.

During the year 1940, 4 cases were notified in aecordanee with the regulations. During 1941, 4 cases were similarly notified :—

		1940	1941
(a) Pulmonary.	Males	1	1
	Females	Nil	3
(b) Non-Pulmonary.	Males	Nil	Nil
	Females	3	Nil
	Totals	4	4

The following are the notifications for the preceding five years :—

	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1939	2	1	3
1938	3	2	5
1937	0	2	2
1936	0	1	1
1935	0	1	1

2. **Age Periods** (New Cases).

	Pulmonary.				Non-Pulmonary.			
	M.		F.		M.		F.	
	1940–1		1940–1		1940–1		1940–1	
Under 1 year.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
45 to 55 years	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
65 and Over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS.

Total Deaths—6 (Respiratory 3, Non-Respiratory 3).

Age Periods—

	Respiratory.				Non-Respiratory.			
	M.		F.		M.		F.	
	1940–1		1940–1		1940–1		1940–1	
Under 1 year.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
45 to 55 years	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 and Over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEARS UNDER REVIEW.

Causes of Death.	1940		1941	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	0	0	0	0
Measles	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough...	0	1	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0	0
Influenza	0	0	0	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	0	0	0	0
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	1	1	1	0
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	1	0	1	1
Syphilis	0	0	0	0
General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis	0	0	1	0
Cancer, Malignant Disease	1	8	4	2
Diabetes	1	0	0	0
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	5	4	2	3
Heart Disease	15	10	5	7
Aneurism	0	0	0	0
Other Circulatory Diseases	2	1	3	3
Bronchitis...	0	0	3	2
Pneumonia (all forms)	3	3	2	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	0	0	4	1
Peptic Ulcer	1	0	0	0
Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	0	0	0	0
Appendicitis	0	0	0	0
Cirrhosis of Liver	0	1	0	0
Other Diseases of Liver, etc.	0	0	0	0
Other Digestive Diseases	0	3	0	2
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	3	1	1	1
Puerperal Sepsis	0	0	0	0
Other Puerperal Causes	0	0	0	0
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, Malformations, etc.	0	2	3	1
Senility	0	0	0	2
Suicide	0	0	0	0
Other Violence	2	2	2	0
Other Defined Diseases	0	1	1	0
Causes Ill-Defined or Unknown	0	0	0	0
Special Causes (Included above)—				
Small-Pox	0	0	0	0
Poliomyelitis	0	0	0	0
Polioencephalitis	0	0	0	0
All Causes	35	38	33	26

Parkham Hostel.

The above Hostel at Parkham Rectory is available for the treatment of evacuee children suffering from Enuresis. "Difficult" children are also admitted. It has accommodation for 20 children.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
N. BOWRING BETTS,
Medical Officer of Health.

1940 - 1941
ANNUAL REPORTS
Of the Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor for the Bideford Rural District

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Market Place,
Bideford.
September, 1942.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you a report relating to the work carried out during the years 1940 and 1941.

It will be appreeiated that as I did not take up my duties until August, 1941, this report also refers to the aetivities of Messrs. F. M. W. King and E. W. Spiegelhalter.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
I. C. WILLIAMS,
Sanitary Surveyor.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER.

General.

Apart from the villages of Abbotsham, Buckland Brewer and Clovelly, the major portion of the houses in the District are served by publie pumps or private supplies taken from springs or wells.

Unfortunately, several parishes are not adequately supplied with water. However, by having constant regard to the purity of existing supplies it is hoped to safeguard them until sueh time as a fresh start can be made on schemes affecting Public Health.

In the case of Hartland Town, which is morc in need of an adequate water supply than any other part of the Rural District, a scheme for the provision of a standpipe supply is being presented to the Ministry of Health. The scheme can be augmented after the war to provide a greater quantity of watcr per head, thus making possible the provision of a main water supply in most of the houses in the town.

In Buckland Brewer village the water supply which was completed during the early part of 1939 continues to function extremely satisfaetorily, due in no small mcasure to the attention

freely given by Mr. Counceillor F. Mills. If virtue is its own reward this gentleman can consider himself amply repaid.

A detailed survey of all water supplies in the district was presented to the Council in the Annual Report for 1939 and in the interests of paper economy I do not propose to review the position. Suffice it to say that most of the conditions outlined in that Report remained unaltered at the end of 1941.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

General.

Several parishes in the District are not served by adequate and well-designed sewerage systems. The size of the disposal tanks are, in most cases, out of all proportion to the number of houses served. As a consequence, during the summer months regular attention is necessary to prevent the creation of nuisances.

As for the sewers themselves, these are, for the most parts mainly road surface water drains into which house drainage systems have been connected : a far from satisfactory system. It is hoped that conditions will be improved as soon as circumstances return to normal.

The Parishes most in need of attention are Abbotsham, Buckland Brewer, Hartland, Littleham, Parkham and Woolsery. At Hartland the main trouble arises from the unsatisfactory sewers and private drains, coupled with inadequate arrangements for the removal of storm water from roofs, yards and roads.

The sewage disposal works at Gatta Meadow, Hartland, are functioning as well as can be expected in view of the remarks given in the last paragraph.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

In this district there are no trade wastes or effluent to deal with and as a consequence, it has not been necessary to devote much attention to the prevention of polluting matters entering rivers or streams.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

A considerable number of houses in the various parishes are now provided with water closets. However, the dry conservancy method is still used extensively, as a result of the difficulties, particularly in outlying districts, of obtaining adequate and suitable water supply and drainage arrangements.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Public Scavenging is regularly carried out by contract in the following parishes :—Clovelly, Hartland and Woolsery. In the parishes of Monkleigh and Parkham refuse dumps alone are provided within a reasonable distance of the villages, and the inhabitants make their own arrangements for the conveyance of refuse to these sites.

The cleansing of cesspools is carried out by the occupants or owners of the properties concerned.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action under this heading has been necessary during the period under review.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are no public or privately owned swimming baths or pools in this District.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

It is satisfactory to note than in this District, no complaints relating to the existence of bed bugs have been received during 1940 and 1941, and accordingly no action has been taken.

SCHOOLS.

There are seventeen schools in the District all of which are inspected when necessary. This Department has brought many defects to the notice of the County Council who have co-operated amicably. At Meddon School a modern water-carriage drainage system was installed during 1941.

The "Milk in Schools Scheme" continues to operate successfully. The water supplies to the schools are in most cases derived from wells on the premises.

There are three school canteens in the district, situated at Parkham, Woolsery and Clovelly. Meals are served at small expense in congenial surroundings. The diet is varied and well-balanced, which cannot always be said of the lunches carried by children to the schools where no canteen facilities are available.

HOUSING.

Work under the Housing Act has been seriously affected by the wartime shortage of materials and labour, but many minor repairs have been carried out under Section 9, Housing Act 1936.

During 1940 and 1941 five cottages were reconditioned under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts. The total number of houses reconditioned in the district under the Acts since the inception of the Scheme is 77.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Meat Supply.

Since the centralisation of slaughtering arrangements of the Ministry of Food came into force on January 15th, 1940, the inspectorial duties have been largely confined to inspection of meat at the Public Abattoir, Bideford, by arrangement with Mr. John Ackland, Meat and Food Inspector, Bideford, as and when assistance was required. On no occasion was it necessary to condemn meat in this district after it had once been inspected at the Public Abattoir, a tribute to the zeal of the Bideford Food Inspector.

A small outbreak of Trichiniasis occurred in the district during September, 1941, three persons being affected with this disease in Parkham and one in Monkleigh. The infection was traced to a pig suffering from Trichinosis, and all necessary steps were taken to prevent a recurrence. No routine inspection for Trichinosis in pork is carried out in this country because the disease is very rare, and can only be detected by lengthy microscopic examination. Thorough cooking of pork is the only sure safeguard against the disease in man.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1938.

Twelve premises have been approved and licensed for the preparation or manufacture of sausages and potted, pressed or pickled meat. One building has also been approved for the sale, or the manufacture for sale, of ice-cream.

MILK SUPPLY.

Practically every parish in the district has been visited for the purposes of inspection and registration of cowsheds and dairies.

Under the Milk (Special Designations) Orders there were at the end of 1941 :—

16 producers of Accredited milk
4 ,, .. Tuberculin Tested milk.

In addition there were six approved producers supplying milk under the "Milk in Schools" Scheme.

Efforts are still being made to induce farmers to become designated milk producers.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Full details of the above are incorporated in the report of the Medical Officer of Health. Although Disinfection is always carried out by this Department, after cases of infectious disease have been removed to the Isolation Hospital, this procedure, known as terminal disinfection, is now thought to be of little value. It may be said, however, that the use of soap and water is of hygienic value where insanitary conditions exist. Therefore, in addition to fumigating the infected parts of the dwellings by means of formaldehyde the Council issue free supplies of soap and disinfectant to the households concerned.

Each of the schools in the district is issued with disinfectant as required.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS,

Sanitary Surveyor.

1940 - 1941

Building Surveyor's Annual Reports

Building Surveyor's Office,
Market Place,
Bideford.
September, 1942.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Bideford Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to present the following details relating to the duties of the Building Surveyor's Department during the years 1940 and 1941.

The provisions of the Council's Building Byelaws (adopted in 1938 with the approval of the Ministry of Health) continued to be enforced without relaxation during the two years 1940 and 1941.

Owing to war conditions only eight plans have been deposited for approval during the two years, there being four received in 1940 and four in 1941.

In September, 1941, the Council decided that before plans of buildings to be used for human habitation were approved, provision would first have to be made to ensure, so far as possible the adequacy and purity of the domestic water supply.

Council Houses.

The Council Houses in the district are visited from time to time with due regard to the feelings of the occupants.

The need for economy in the use of materials has made it necessary to refrain from bringing forward anything but urgent matters. However, the Council has authorised the carrying out of all small improvements, renovations and repairs to which its attention has been drawn.

There was an outbreak of fire at "Ocean View" Council House, Higher Clovelly, in November, 1941. Damage was confined to doors, windows, walls, floors and ceilings. The cost of repairs and renewals amounted to £82 15s. 6d. with which sum the Council was reimbursed by the Insurance Company.

Damage to goods and chattels (the property of the tenant) was very extensive, and two people received injuries caused by fire.

Council Houses are situated in the undermentioned parishes :—

Abbotsham	2
Alwington	4
Buckland Brewer	4
Clovelly	2
Hartland	4
Littleham	2
Monkleigh	2
Parkham	4
Woolsery	2
TOTAL	26

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS,

Building Surveyor.